

REMARKS

Applicants have amended Claims 7, 20 and 21. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added by the present amendment.

I. Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. As noted in the Office Action, Applicants have amended Claim 7 to correspond to amended Claim 7 as submitted in the amendment dated September 18, 2002. Accordingly, Applicants resubmit herein the amendment to Claim 7 and reference their arguments of September 18, 2002. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

Claims 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended the term "rubber gel" in Claim 20 to read "crosslinked rubber particle(s)" and Applicants have amended Claim 21 to be drawn to a rubber mixture as in Claim 20. Accordingly, Applicants submit these amendments overcome the pending rejection and therefore request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

II. Claims Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 15, 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written restriction requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection. As previously argued, component A is not a liquid rubber, and despite the Office Action assertion, page 10, lines 28+ does not clearly indicate to one skilled in the art that component A is a liquid rubber.

Applicants submit "rubber latex" is **a dispersion of rubber particles in water**. The aqueous dispersion can be characterized by the solids content, the mean particle diameter, the particle size distribution, the nature of the rubber particles, etc. A well known example for a rubber latex is "natural rubber latex" which is the liquid obtained from the rubber tree (*hevea brasiliensis*) after tapping. From this latex the solid rubber is obtained by the coagulation of the latex and by the dewatering and drying of the resulting rubber crumbs. As latices are aqueous dispersions, they exhibit low viscosities comparable with the viscosity of liquids.

Due to these low viscosities latices can be easily processed. It has to be noted, that the viscosity of latices is not governed by the molecular weight of the dispersed rubber, but by factors such as the solid contents and the particle size.

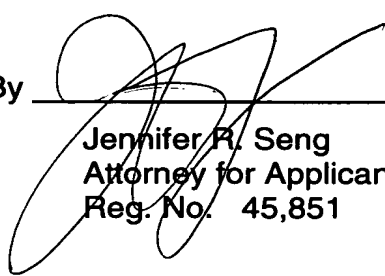
Contrary to a "rubber latex" a "liquid rubber" does neither contain water nor solvent. **A liquid rubber consists of 100% rubber.** A liquid rubber is characterized by its low molar mass, which is in the range 5,000 - 50,000 g/mol more specifically 5,000 - 20,000 g/mol. Due to these low viscosities, liquid rubbers exhibit viscosities comparable with those of honey and pitch. Liquid rubbers are considered to be easily processed.

Typical solid rubbers exhibit molar masses > 50,000 g/mol preferably > 100,000 g/mol. These rubbers can not be processed like liquids. They are more similar with solids (at the first glance). In order to process these solid rubbers, heavy machinery is required.

Accordingly, based on the above, Applicants submit that component A of the present invention is adequately supported by the pending specification and therefore request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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